

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DJIBOU 00609 150901Z POSS DUPE
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 ARA-10 /114 W
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R 150742Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 409
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SANA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
COMIDEASTFOR
USCINCEUR VIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 609

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PDIP, PBOR, ET, SO, DJ

SUBJ: OGADEN WAR NEWS VIEWED FROM DJIBOUTI

1. INDICATIONS OF SUBSTANTIAL ETHIOPIAN FORCE BUILDUP IN
DIRE DAWA AND HARAR AREA CAUSING CONSIDERABLE CONCERN IN
GOVERNMENT CIRCLES AND AMONG GENERAL DJIBOUTI POPULATION.
MAJOR FEAR IS THAT ETHIOPIAN COUNTERATTACK COULD CARRY THROUGH
HARGEISA TO BERBERA AND EFFECTIVELY SURROUND DJIBOUTI WITH
ETHIOPIAN FORCES. COUPLED WITH INFORMATION FROM LOCAL FRENCH
SOURCE INDICATING THAT CERTAIN IRREGULAR UNITS FIGHTING WITH
WSLF AND SOMALI FORCES HAVE DEPARTED FIGHTING AREA AND RE-
TURNED HOME, ETHIOPIAN BUILDUP APPEARS TO BE MATCHED BY
SIGNIFICANT SOFTENING ON SOMALI SIDE.

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2. RUMORS COMING TO DJIBOUTI FROM HARGEISA INDICATE THAT
GROUP OF 40 CUBANS, SEVEN SOVIETS AND FIVE EAST GERMANS WERE
CAPTURED BY WSLF FORCES DURING RECENT ETHIOPIAN COUNTER-
ATTACK AT DACATO. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR US TO VERIFY THIS
INFORMATION.

3. A NUMBER OF YOUNG SOMALI MALES HAVE ATTEMPTED ENTER DJIBOUTI RECENTLY TO AVOID COMPULSORY INDUCTION INTO MILITARY SERVICE. YOUNG MALES ARRIVING AT LOYADA BORDER CROSSING POINT WHO ARE NOT EITHER EMPLOYED BY THE GOVERNMENT OR OTHERWISE ABLE TO ESTABLISH A NEED TO TRAVEL ARE REPORTEDLY COLLECTED ON ARMY TRUCKS AND DRIVEN AWAY TO UNKNOWN LOCATION.

4. COMMENT. ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING THINGS ABOUT DJIBOUTI IS THAT MAJOR WAR GOING ON ONLY 225 MILES AWAY (DISTANCE TO DIRE DAWA) IS ONLY VAGUELY NOTED HERE. OBVIOUSLY, FACT THAT RAILWAY HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR ANY EFFECTIVE SERVICE TO ETHIOPIA SINCE JUNE 1, HAS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP TO COUNTRY. NEVERTHELESS, LOCAL POPULATION WAS NOT TERRIBLY INTERESTED IN WAR SO LONG AS IT APPEARED THAT THE SOMALIS HAD UPPER HAND. THIS DISINTEREST WAS PROBABLY FELT AS STRONGLY BY THE AFARS AS THE ISSAS AND OTHER SOMALI-RELATED ETHNIC GROUPS. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE FEW, IF ANY, LOCAL PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE AFFILIATED WITH EITHER SOMALIA OR ETHIOPIA SO LONG AS THE PRESENT GOVERNMENTS IN MOGADISCIO AND ADDIS ARE IN POWER, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE COMFORT IN APPARENT PARITY ACHIEVED BETWEEN FORCES BY THE END OF JULY. NOW THAT THE BALANCE APPEARS ENDANGERED, THE PEOPLE OF DJIBOUTI WONDER WHETHER THEY MIGHT NOT BE ENGULFED IN AN ETHIOPIAN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE.

5. THIS REPORT FILED BY CHARGE CLARKE BEFORE HIS TEMPORARY
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DEPARTURE FROM DJIBOUTI ON 13 NOVEMBER.
JONES

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NNN

Message Attributes

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